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The University of Dayton

News Release

RELIGION AND PERFORMING ARTS LEADERS TO RECEIVE HONORARY DEGREES FROM UD

DAYTON, Ohio, April 6, 1990--Two leaders from the worlds of religion and the performing arts will receive honorary degrees at the University of Dayton's commencement exercises on Sunday, April 29, at 10 a.m. in the UD Arena. They will be joining more than 1,000 bachelor degree recipients and nearly 250 graduate degree recipients.

The Most Rev. Daniel E. Pilarczyk, archbishop of Cincinnati and president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, will receive the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters. The Dayton native was ordained a priest in the Roman Catholic Church in 1959. From 1974 to 1982 he simultaneously served as auxiliary bishop of Cincinnati and director of the education ministries of the archdiocese until 1982 when Pope Paul II named him archbishop of Cincinnati.

Pilarczyk will be honored "as a citizen of the world," according to a citation that will be presented to him. "He has led with humility, served with courage and ministered with compassion. Long will the Roman Catholic Church be blessed with the effects of his work in the archdiocese of Cincinnati, the United States and the world."

Jeraldyn Kilborn Blunden, founder of the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, will receive the honorary degree of Doctor of Fine Arts. Blunden is in serious condition at St. Elizabeth Medical Center in Dayton where she has been hospitalized since late February.

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She studied dance with Josephine and Hermene Schwarz of the Dayton Ballet before they asked her to assume teaching responsibility for a group of black youths. In 1968, the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company (DCDC), one of the country's oldest predominantly black dance companies, was born.

"Through years with far less than ideal studios with many hours on the road in vans and buses, and with very little financial support, she forged an initially all-volunteer group into a 16-member professional dance company of national stature," Blunden's citation reads.

"Although she trained with the country's best and danced with both the Karamu Dancers of Cleveland and with the forerunner of the Dayton Ballet," her citation continues, "it was as a teacher that she made her lasting impression. Jeraldyn Blunden has used (the company) as her medium to shape art and people. She is a consummate teacher, giving deeply of herself, drawing out the talent of her students, and making it possible for them to reach new levels of self-esteem, pride and excellence."

A lifelong Dayton resident, Blunden is a past recipient of the W.S. McIntosh Award; the Ohio Arts Council annual award for arts administration; and the Dayton Metropolitan Civic Women's "Woman of the Year" award. In 1983, she was one of 20 women in dance honored by the Thelma Hill Performing Arts Center in New York.

In addition to the commencement exercises, UD graduation weekend activities include a graduation Mass on Saturday, April 28, at 4:30 p.m. in the Arena and a reception immediately following the Mass.